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THE MOSAIC RITUAL.

UNDER the Christian dispensation, we enjoy immensely greater advantages than they did who lived under the Mosaic dispensation. Christianity, compared with the law of Moses, is a system of light, and liberty, and peace. Think of the toil of being obliged, as it enjoined, to go up three times a year to Jerusalem. Think of the vast expense of sustaining its priesthood, and providing its sacrifices. Think of the spirit of bondage and of fear that it engendered, its observance being enforced by bodily penalties and temporal judgments. Peter calls it a yoke of bondage, which, says he, neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; and Paul calls it a yoke of bondage from which Christ hath made us free. Under the Mosaic dispensation, the Church was in a state of childhood; and, doubtless, God saw that the religious ritual which he gave by Moses, was best suited to its tender age. In childhood, an heir is subject to tutors and governors, but when he comes of age, their use is at an end, and he is freed from an education and a discipline which, though once beneficial, would be now a bondage. In like manner the Church in its childhood was under the education of the Mosaic system. It was in bondage under the elements of that economy. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. The law was a schoolmaster to bring unto Christ. Christ has come; the youth is of age; the Church passes from the school of Moses, and the narrow nursery of Judea, and enters upon the inheritance—the inheritance of the earth!

Whilst, however, we admire Christianity, there is a danger lest we should undervalue the system which preceded it. The same Church existed then as now, only in a state of less maturity. The same religion existed then as now, only under a less perfect form. The Mosaic ritual, though abolished in the death of Christ, may still be studied with peculiar advantage; and let me say, we study it too little. We are too much in the habit of regarding the law of Moses, not, indeed, without veneration or awe, but without interest, and as of no use. We regard it as we would some religious ruin of antiquity—some Druid altar or some Gothic fane—a melancholy monument of the past, a spectacle and a wonder, but of no utility to the present generation. Of a time, perchance, we cast our eyes into the Mosaic ritual, and read, with mingled feelings of curiosity and ignorance, and wonder and weariness, the institution of its tabernacle, its ark, its washings, its sacrifices, its priests, its feasts and offerings; but we do not consider the high end which they subserved, nor the evangelical meaning of which they were the appointed signs. We are as one who strays by accident into some ancient but abandoned burial ground; he gazes on the moss-grown monuments, and spells over the time-worn inscriptions, but hears not the voice that speaks from the tomb!

Though the Mosaic ritual is at an end, let us consider what a peculiarity it has given to the language and illustrations of Christianity. Without a thorough knowledge of the Mosaic institutions, it is impossible to understand many portions of the New Testament; even much of the devotional part of the Old Testament will be as absolutely meaningless to us as an unknown language. For example, when Christ is called "the lamb of God;" "a lamb without blemish;" "our passover sacrificed for us;" what could we make of such language did we not understand the typical nature of the passover, and of the sacrifices? When we are exhorted to "offer ourselves a living sacrifice," when works of mercy are commended as "sacrifices with which God is well pleased," what havoc would we make, what self-immolation would we practise, of what self-righteousness would we be guilty, did we not understand the difference between bloody and unbloody sacrifices—sacrifices of expiation, and sacrifices of thanksgiving? "Purge me with hyssop," says the Psalmist: What meaning has these words in our mouths, unless we understand the ceremonial usage of dipping the bunch of hyssop in the blood of the sacrifice, and sprinkling the altar? Hence the New Testament phrase, "the blood of sprinkling." "So will we render thee the *calves* of our lips," says the Pro-

phet: what nonsense does this appear to some ignorant scoffer like Tom Paine, who will not be at the pains to consider the explanation this language derives from the type of calves offered in sacrifice, but who makes his own ignorance and stupidity arguments against the word of God.

The Mosaic ritual is not that uninteresting, useless, cumbersome mass on the Old Testament page, which ignorance has often deemed it. Like an Egyptian pyramid, it stands out through all time, monumental of his plan and power who placed it there. Rightly viewed, it is an ancient and convincing witness of the truth of Christianity; for though distinct from Christianity, it was thoroughly Christian, testifying beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. The Christian system is founded on the Mosaic. Christianity stands out by itself, majestic, symmetrical, glorious, crowned with the conquests of eighteen centuries, and destined to last as long as the world; but to inspect it more minutely, and appreciate it more fully, it is often useful to erect around it the scaffolding of the Mosaic ritual, taken down on the completion of the Christian building. On the other hand, we should never go to the Old Testament ceremonial, without the light of the New Testament in our hand. We cannot understand the Mosaic institutions without the light of Christianity; and yet the grand facts and doctrines of Christianity derive some of their very best illustrations from those types and figures which God gave of them in the ceremonial institutions of his ancient Church. The law, it is said, was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ: yet a correct knowledge of each of these systems is necessary to the right understanding and appreciation of the other. Childish, unmeaning and burdensome, as may the Mosaic ceremonial outwardly appear to the eye of sense, let us take with us the lamp of Christianity to explore it, and what treasures of Gospel truth does it present, like the mountain which yields gold and diamonds to the skilful miner, but which, to the eye of ignorance, presents nothing but one huge, bleak, barren surface, "black with the heath of countless years." The ceremonial law was a map, the Gospel is the country itself; the law was the outline, the Gospel is the filling up; the law was the plan, according to the pattern God shewed Moses on the mount; Christianity is the building of mercy itself, in all things corresponding with the typical exhibition which the law gave of the way of salvation: thus reciprocally receiving and reflecting light, they mutually illustrate each other, and fill the mind with a luminous perception of the mystery of redemption.

The Jewish ceremonial, unmeaning as it has been often thought, and unstudied as it is too much, is *one continuous Gospel allegory.* Think of the dedications enjoined by the Jewish religion. The first fruits of harvest must be dedicated to the Lord; every new house must be dedicated; and the first-born of man and beast must be dedicated. These dedications, no longer binding in form and letter, are yet binding in principle and spirit; for they are built upon this eternal truth, and inculcate this unchanging duty, that as all we are and have are God's, all we are and have should be employed in God's service.

Think of its various festivals. These, while they were memorials of national mercies, were prefigurations of spiritual blessings. The jubilee, which proclaimed liberty to the captive, and general joy to the whole land, prefigured that higher liberty with which the Spirit of life makes believers free from sin and death, and that millennial joy which shall yet fill all nations. What an emblem was the passover, with its lamb roasted with fire, and blood sprinkled on the door-posts, and flesh eaten with bitter herbs and with unleavened bread, of Christ suffering grievous sufferings as our sacrifice, of the application of his blood to purge the guilty conscience, and of that repentance and that inward sincerity with which we should make application to his merits and feed upon his salvation.

Think of its divers washings—washings of the priests, washings of the sacrifices, washings before meat. These had a moral signification. These were emblems of inward purity—symbols of the washing of regeneration.

Think of its multitudinous sacrifices; its burnt-offerings, sin-offerings, and peace-offerings; its annual sacrifices, its monthly sacrifices, its daily sacrifices; lambs, goats, calves, sheep, heifers, oxen—all offered in sacrifice. Twenty-two thousand oxen did Solomon offer up at the dedication of the temple. What a destruction of animal life did the Jewish ritual require! What a lavish effusion of animal blood! What an amount of wealth was the Jew required to burn to ashes upon his altar! Why was all this? "It is finished!" exclaimed Christ with his expiring breath. How finished? He was the end of the law. He was the Priest and Sacrifice, of whom all priests and sacrifices were the emblems. He made an end of all sin-offering, by the one offering of himself.

Think, in fact, of the great events, and places, and persons, and religious rites and usages, which figure throughout the wonderful history of the ancient people of God; and are they

not for ever hallowed and handed down to all time in holy writ, as the chosen emblems and allegories of those greater and more glorious things which have been brought to light by the Gospel? Can we think of the ark, and the flood, without feeling more vividly how Christ is the ark that saves from the vengeance of eternal fire? Can we read of Abraham offering up Isaac, without setting before our eyes the Son of God spared not of the Father, but delivered up for us all? But the time would fail to specify examples, where all is emblem. The serpent lifted on the pole—the rock, and the manna in the desert —Egypt, the Red Sea, the wilderness, Jordan and Canaan—the cities of refuge—the tabernacle, the temple, altars, incense, mercy-seat, cherubim and holy of holies—the priests, the prophets and the kings of Judea—all, all stand forth on the Old Testament page, illuminated by New Testament light, as so many symbols of the blessings and glories of our salvation. These were "a shadow of good things to come, but the body is of Christ."

Various rites in the ceremonial law were emblems of the inward affections of all true worshippers, as well as types of future blessings. Were there frequent washings of the body? These represented and impressed on the minds of worshippers the necessity of the purification of their hearts. Was circumcision performed on every Israelite? This not only was a memorial of the covenant made with Abraham, and a sign of the promised Messiah, but it was an emblem of the separation of the soul from sin; "He is not a Jew who is one outwardly, neither is that *circumcision* which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and *circumcision* is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men but of God." Were priests and holy things consecrated by anointing oil? This oil is an emblem of the graces of the Spirit, as necessary qualifications in all who are priests unto God to offer up spiritual sacrifices. Was salt offered in all the sacrifices? All acceptable worship must be offered in the sincerity and anti-corrupting influence of grace. Were the priests clothed in white robes? God must be worshipped in the beauty of holiness. Was the passover to be eaten with unleavened bread? The people of God, in every age, are concerned to put away from their soul all corrupting principles and affections: and it becomes us, especially, to keep the Christian feast, not with the leaven of malice or of hypocrisy, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. Thus we see that the ceremonial law abounded with mementoes of

those moral qualities, and spiritual dispositions which God requires in all his worshippers. The motto of the high priest's mitre is engraven above the gate of heaven, "Holiness to the Lord."

In the giving of the moral law, great brevity was observed; general commands only were delivered, and many things left to be deduced from them; but in the ceremonial law the greatest minuteness was observed, and particular details given of every thing that was to be done. Every thing was to be done that was commanded; nothing was to be added, nor aught diminished. "See," said God to Moses, "that thou make every thing according to the pattern shewed thee in the mount." From all this we learn that man is particularly disposed to corrupt the worship of God, and that God is particularly jealous lest that his worship should be interpolated by human inventions. The law of Moses was the pattern of the Jewish worship; the law of Christ is the pattern of ours. The Church has no right to decree rites and ceremonies. We are "to keep the ordinances as they have been delivered."

The observance of the ceremonial law was a test of subjection to the God of Israel. No Israelite might neglect it. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy." Can we be the subjects of Christ unless we keep *all his* ordinances, as well as his commandments? If we read not *his* word, keep not *his* day, hear not his Gospel, and come not to *his* table, we are not Christians indeed. And will he not, when revealed from heaven in flaming fire, take vengeance on them that obey not?

The pious Israelite was accepted in his observance of the Old Testament worship; and shall not the devout Christian be accepted whilst he worships God in the Spirit through Christ the Mediator? The high priest, and the blood, and the altar, and the holy of holies, were figures of Christ, and of his atonement and intercession, of the throne of grace, and of the heaven of heavens. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water."

With what gratitude and holy obedience, should we embrace and exemplify the superior light, liberty, and simplicity of the Gospel worship. The darkness is past and the true light now

shines. The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Christ has blotted out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, nailing it to his cross. We are to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and not be entangled again in the yoke of Mosaic bondage. Our privileges are enlarged, and our obligations are proportionably increased. A superiority of light, love, liberty, and peace and joy, distinguish the religion of Christ above that of the Mosaic dispensation. Let light, love, liberty, peace and joy, therefore, fill our hearts, and adorn our characters. "For ye are not come unto the mount (Sinai) that burned with fire, nor unto blackness and darkness and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice, they that heard entreated that it should not be spoken to them any more; and so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

LUTHER.

COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS IN AMERICA.

Their effect on the Character of American Ministers.

I THINK you will not be able to pass your eye over this list (a list of the Colleges and theological Seminaries in the United States) and the previous statements, and connect them with the circumstances of the people, without being filled with surprise and wonder. Here are no less than TWENTY-ONE theological colleges, all of which have been instituted since the year 1808! and they contain 853 students, and have accumulated 57,000 volumes! Here are 75 colleges for general education, most of them with professional departments, and they have 8,136 students! and forty of these have been created since 1814. Altogether there are NINETY-SIX colleges, and no less than NINE THOUSAND AND THIRTY-TWO STUDENTS! Some of these colleges are literally springing up in the desert, and are putting themselves in readiness to bless generations

that shall be born. It is impossible not to feel that the influence they exert must be amazing in extent, and in the highest degree sanitory.

Besides the general influence which they must have, I wish to remark *their effect on the ministry.* In doing so, it must be candidly admitted that many persons composing the existing ministry have not graduated in any college, and therefore have, at least, no *direct* benefit. The Methodists and Baptists, especially, have here, as they have with us, undervalued an educated ministry; and many who have entered a college have, from pious but indiscreet zeal, not kept terms. Of the 11,000 ministers reported, I should think 3,000 may be regarded as mostly self-taught; and of the 8,000 left, I should conclude that upwards of 2,000 had not regularly graduated in their respective colleges. Still this leaves nearly 6,000 who have been fairly educated; and this amount does, in fact, give to the entire ministry as much the character of intelligence and cultivation as shall any where be found.

Whatever may be the actual use of the means to be found in this country, certainly those means, as they contribute to supply the church with a well-trained and efficient ministry, excel any thing which we have at home. The student for the sacred calling gets a better classical and general education than he would get in our dissenting colleges, while his professional education is not inferior; and he gets a theological education unspeakably better than Oxford or Cambridge would afford him, though his classical advantages would be less. He derives a two-fold advantage from the arrangements at home, as compared with our colleges, and they relate to *method* and *time.* The general course of learning, and the professional course, are kept perfectly distinct; and the professional is made to follow the collegiate; and the certificate of excellence in the one course is requisite to commencement in the other. The *time,* also, is adequate; four years are allowed for what is preparatory, and three years for what is professional.

After these references, you may be anxious to know what would be my judgment as to the comparative practical efficiency of their ministry. So far as general statement can meet such a question, I would not withhold an impartial opinion, since just distinction on such a subject must be of the utmost importance. That the ministry of that country, whether educated or uneducated, must in itself be highly efficient, is placed beyond dispute, in every competent judgment, by the single and exhilarating fact, THAT IT IS A REGENERATED MINISTRY. Yes, as far

as I could ascertain, the whole body of the orthodox ministers, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, and mostly the Episcopalians, are truly regenerated men. Bringing the *whole* ministry there, and the *whole* ministry here, to this single and vital test, I leave you to say where the advantage rests.

There are other points of comparison that may not be without profit, and in which we shall not uniformly be the losers. If the ministers there have decidedly the best opportunities of preparing for their work, I think they usually avail themselves less of them afterward than is common with us. They have fewer books and they read less; they seem to rely more on what the college has done for them; and they consume so much time in writing their own thoughts, as to allow them little for enlarged communion with those of other, and mostly better men.

In many cases, they require to be more intellectual, but less metaphysical in their ministry; and to consult manner as well as intention. We have, undoubtedly, many men who equal them in earnest and powerful address to the conscience, but, as a body, they have decidedly more directness in their ministration. We look more at what is secondary: they at what is primary. They, in looking to the end, will often disregard the means by which they may best attain it; and we, as often, in regarding the complicated means, may lose sight of the end for a season. They have less respect for the nicer feelings; and we have more difficulty, when our purpose is distinctly before us, of moving towards it. They have more promptness and decision, and move with sudden power to a given object; but if that object is to be obtained by patient and steady perseverance, we are rather more likely to be successful. In doing an evident and great good, they do not always consider whether they may not do a proportionate mischief; while we frequently, from the fear of consequences, do almost nothing. They make the better evangelists; and we the better pastors.

Circumstances in either country have undoubtedly contributed to produce these differences; and the consideration both of cause and effect may be profitable to each party. One may readily see in this ministerial character a connexion with the revivals, which have at various seasons been developed. How far the character may have caused the revivals, or the revivals created the character, though a curious, is by no means a useless inquiry.—*Reed and Matheson's Visit to the American Churches.*

THE SCRIPTURE HISTORY.

THE history of the Church is the history of God. In it we have a record of his most special acts of providence towards the human race. We behold there an exhibition of those eternal principles of truth, and grace, and infinite opposition to sin, on which he conducts his universal government. We there see his judgments against wickedness, and his interpositions on behalf of his people. God is unchangeable; in his past procedure we have the pattern of his future administrations; and in consulting the inspired records, for an account of his proceedings with men under certain circumstances in time past, we may safely infer what will be his mode of dealing with them, under similar circumstances, to the end of the world. The history of the Church, is a developement of that eternal plan on which God conducts the government of the universe.

The history of the Church is the history of religion. By reviewing the approved examples of the people of God, in seasons of acting or suffering, we may easily infer what evils we are called to avoid, what graces to exercise, what duties to perform in similar seasons.

These considerations will shew us why no new revelation is given in our day; why God now makes no addition to the Scriptures; why inspiration is witheld. It is no longer needed. Had inspiration been continued to our day, and its dictates committed to writing, not only would the Bible have long since become, like our Parliamentary "statutes *at large*," too voluminous to be consulted, but there would have been nothing but a repetition, under other forms, of the same doctrines, directions, encouragements and threatenings, contained in our Scriptures. After giving the life of Christ, John states that Jesus did many things which he did not record, and that, should they be written every one, the world itself, he supposed, could not contain the books that should be written: nor was more necessary; enough was recorded to shew that Jesus was the promised Messiah, to display his principles and character, and to lead men to him for everlasting life, John xx. 30, 31; xxi. 25. Had we inspired men now to write us new inspired books, doubtless passing events would be recorded, men's hearts would be laid bare, actions would be traced up infallibly to their motives, and events to their causes, and a divine tribunal, like the oracle on the mercy-seat of old, would be erected for the solution of our difficulties and the decision of our controversies. Notwithstanding this, the

conduct of God, of angels, of devils, of the wicked, and of Christians, would be exactly the same, in all their moral principles and designs, as that which has been already fully developed in the Scriptures. We might have new facts, but we could have no new principles. God is the same, eternal and unchangeable, in his attributes and in the principles on which he governs the world. Fallen humanity, and regenerated humanity, continue the same in their opposing principles and actings; and, circumstances being the same, like causes will produce like effects to the end of the world. The Bible, therefore, as it is, is sufficient for the Church's direction in all future time. "Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? It hath been already of old time. The thing that hath been, is that which shall be; that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun."

God has implanted a principle of imitation in man, and we are more influenced by example, than by precept or by reasoning. The Scripture seizes this imitative principle of our nature, and sets before us a multitude of facts in which religion is exhibited in her life and power—exhibited in her genuine character—exhibited by her works—exhibited in the lives of her children. What is the effect? We embrace that divine religion as the fairest daughter of heaven, sent down to guide us thither: we cast in our lot with the people of God: we follow in the footsteps of those who have preceded us to glory: we see the good of God's chosen rejoice with the gladness of his nation, and glory with his inheritance."

What would have been the consequence, had the Bible exhibited religion only in the form of a systematic scheme of doctrines and of duties? What would the consequence have been, had religion been taught by no other means than sermons, lectures, or books, and never reduced to practice—never taught by example? The religion of Christ, however true in itself, and however suited to the condition and exigencies of man, would have long since perished from the earth. Religion, as long as it consists only of doctrines and rules, is like machinery in working order, but which never works: it is like the picture or the statue, which resembles the living man, but yet lives not: it is like the dead body, stretched out cold, ghastly, and motionless before you, fast hastening to corruption, and fit only to put away from you for ever; for as the body without the spirit is dead, religion without works is dead also.

Religion, therefore, in order to be taught effectually to others, and to pass as the grand circulating medium of happi-

ness throughout the world, must be exemplified. It must be exhibited in operation. It must be developed by showing what fruits its principles will produce. We must see such facts as shall bring out its truth, and power, and utility, and make them evident before us. We must see what it can do for us. We must see how it bears itself in seasons of calamity, and in the hour of sorrow and of death. It must be embodied in flesh and blood before our eyes, living and acting in the persons of God's people. A difficulty rises here. Man of himself is dark in his mind, erroneous in his decisions, and sees but the externals of men and things. How shall he determine with certainty, and how shall he know with full assurance what is truth? Man, too, is proud and impatient of dictation;—in nothing so much as in matters of religion. What authority then shall awe, control, and fix the mind? Here we see the need and value, not only of an inspired system of doctrine and of duty, but of an inspired history. In the lives and deeds of men delineated in Scripture, we see the difference between piety and profanity, truth and error, sincerity and hypocrisy, false and true religion. Why not sweep all away, like the infidel, under one general denunciation of imposture and fiction? Here is a history dictated by the Spirit of God: it comes to us on divine authority: it demands as well as deserves our study: its developements of heart, and motive, and principle are infallible: it was written for our learning, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfected, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

It was important that we should have, on inspired authority, an historical developement of the principles, workings, and consequences of moral evil. Where, is it asked, is the distinction between vice and virtue, obedience and sin? Does the one produce any worse consequences in this world, or in that which is to come, than the other? The distinction will never impress our minds so effectually if only doctrinally declared, as when a practical exhibition of it is set before our eyes. Scripture history furnishes this. Behold the devils cast down to hell—see Adam's expulsion from Paradise—look at the flood drowning the world—look at Sodom and Gomorrah burned with fire from heaven—the Israelites punished by serpents, and fire, and earthquakes in the desert—the Jews driven out of their own land, exiles, and wanderers among all nations; study these, and a thousand more instances of sin

and of punishment in the inspired history, and know and feel that there is an everlasting distinction between sin and holiness, obedience and disobedience;—that sin is the source of all our miseries—that it has kindled the fire of hell—that it is hateful to God, and damning to the soul.

Do you demand if it be possible for doctrine to be taught by history? You think this impossible. Let us see if this be the case. Take the doctrine of God's sovereignty—a doctrine you will admit to be mysterious. See this exhibited in the history of Jacob and his seed, and of Esau and his seed. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." All admit the great deep there is in perceiving the union and harmony of God's decrees with the free agency and accountability of man. See this exemplified in the history of our Lord's crucifixion. "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." Had God a purpose of mercy for fallen man? Behold the manifestation of this amazing truth in the history of our Lord's incarnation, sacrifice and ascension; "in this was manifested the love of God, in that he sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world." Have any of our fallen race been chosen in Christ from the foundation of the world, and appointed to salvation? Behold the decree developed in its execution. It has been ever true, "as many as were *ordained* to eternal life believed." Let us select some historical illustrations of the effects of certain good and evil principles, viewed in contrast with each other. For example—

You feel a difficulty in perceiving that, more than wealth, arts, learning and philosophy, righteousness exalteth a nation; and that, notwithstanding wealth, and arms, and conquest, and territory, and population, sin is the reproach and ruin of any people. Open up the Bible history; view the desolations of Egypt, Babylon, Tyre, Jerusalem, and Rome, and be convinced.

Is there any history to shew the evil of unbelief in contrast with the power of faith. Read the history of Israel in the wilderness. Why did God swear in his wrath that they should not enter into his rest? Because of unbelief. What is the improvement? "Let us labour to enter" into that heavenly "rest" of which the rest of Canaan was an emblem, lest we "fall after the same example of unbelief." On the other hand, what does inspired history shew of the power of faith? Read the glorious proofs which are furnished in the eleventh of Hebrews; see there what faith wrought by, and for, Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses. Read the New

Testament history, and see how faith enabled the apostles and primitive believers to labour, and suffer, and die for the cause of the Lord Jesus.

Is there any inspired history to shew the comparative merits of the Gospel and human philosophy, as an instrument in the reformation of mankind? Greece and Rome were famous for literature, the arts and sciences; yet the people were grossly idolatrous, and addicted to the most horrid vices: a proof, that the world by wisdom knew not God. But the Gospel went forth, and the idols were abolished; Christ was received as the only Saviour; God was worshipped; the lewd, the intemperate, the cruel and the dishonest, were made chaste, temperate, merciful and just: a proof that the preaching of the cross is the wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation.

Have we any inspired history to show us the utter inadequacy of all earthly good to impart real happiness to the immortal mind? We are saved from the necessity of making the perilous experiment for ourselves. Solomon did so; his experience is left on record, and all ages have the benefit of his testimony. After having, severally, made trial of wealth, and learning, and business, and pleasure, and power, and grandeur, what is the result to which he came? What is the verdict which he pronounced? "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit."

Is there any inspired history to determine the question, should the leglislature do any thing for the support and spread of true religion? The approved examples of David and Solomon, of Hezekiah and Josiah, of Ezra and Nehemiah, and of the heathen princes Cyrus, Darius, and Ahasuerus, determine in the affirmative. On this point, let it be observed, that one guiding principle must ever be kept in mind, that the means employed by a government for the promotion of religion, should be appropriate means—Scriptural means. As what was acceptably done for the promotion of religion in Old Testament times, was by means in accordance with the spirit and laws of the Mosaic dispensation; in like manner, what should be done for the promotion of religion now, should be by means in accordance with the spirit and laws of the Christian dispensation.

Has inspired history left us any testimony against the inefficacy of self-righteousness, either to justify or to sanctify the soul? Behold the history of unconverted Paul. Touching the righteousness of the ceremonial law, he was blameless: yet he was a blasphemer and a persecutor, and was a child of wrath, while going about to establish his own righteousness.

Why were the Gentiles received, and the Jews rejected? The Jews sought it not by faith; they stumbled at Christ crucified; they had a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge; for, going about to establish their own righteousness, they submitted not to the righteousness of God, through Christ, who is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

We need not amplify. Every reader has a key by which he may prove the effects of every good, and of every evil principle. For apostacy, remember Lot's wife. See the danger of covetousness, in the fate of Judas. Behold the portraiture of hypocrisy, in the Pharisees—of infidelity, in the Sadducees—cruelty, in Herod—persecution, in the Jews who killed prophets and apostles, and Christ himself. Look at David's and at Peter's fall, and trust not to your own heart. Behold the triumphs of the Gospel, and see the mighty working of the Spirit of God. Trace the labours of the apostles, and see the constraining power of love to Jesus. Light the torch of your zeal, and courage, and constancy, at the fire of the martyrs, that Christ may give you also a crown of life.

LUTHER.

PROGRESS OF ORTHODOXY IN BOSTON.

[During the last summer, a deputation from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, consisting of Rev. Messrs. A. Reed and Matheson, visited America, with a view of maintaining fraternal intercourse with the friends of evangelical religion in the Western world. Their reception was invariably favourable; and, since their return to England, they have presented the British public with the results of a very accurate and extensive observation. The work has just appeared, in two handsome octavo volumes, and we shall feel much disappointed if it do not excite deep interest, particularly among evangelical Christians, in these countries. We shall occasionally avail ourselves of the ample resources which it supplies, for the instruction and gratification of our readers, and with a view to create and strengthen that sympathy which the friends of truth, through the world, should exercise towards each other. With sincere pleasure, we insert the following document entitled "*Progress of truth in Boston,*" and drawn up on the spot by those who had the best opportunities of knowing and judging.—EDIT.]

The present enlargement of the evangelical churches in Boston is so great, and the growth has been from such small

beginnings, we think gratitude requires that they should not be concealed from the public.

In the year 1803, religion had greatly declined from the principles and practices of our pilgrim fathers, in all the Congregational churches. All the Congregational ministers in Boston, except Dr. Eckley of the Old South, had become Unitarians, though they did not openly avow it. There were no weekly lectures, no conference meetings, no church meetings, no foreign mission, education, tract or Bible societies, no Sabbath-schools, no monthly concert, no religious newspapers. The church appeared to be swallowed up in the world. But the Great Head of the church had yet reserved a few hidden ones, who had not departed from the faith. A small number of pious mothers in Israel had, for several years, attended a private meeting for prayer, where they mourned over the desolations of Zion, and besought the Lord to revive his work. Early in the year 1804, a few brethren of the Old South church, being grieved by the low state of religion, made an effort to have a public evening lecture established. The church agreed to the proposal; but the pew proprietors opposed it, and succeeded in preventing it. Finding they could not prevail in this measure, *eight* brethren held a meeting, in March of that year, and formed a "Society for Religious Improvement," not thinking it prudent to call it a *Conference Meeting*. Their state of feeling and inexperience, however, were such, that, for several weeks, they *could not pray together;* but only read the Scriptures, and conversed on religious subjects. In about a month after their first meeting, they felt a freedom to unite in prayer; and, finding their faith and strength increased, they prevailed on Dr. Eckley to establish a weekly lecture in a private house; but they continued their Society meetings as before. They then resolved to give themselves to more earnest prayer. The Lord soon put it into their hearts to build a new house for public worship, where the Gospel should be faithfully preached without restriction. As soon as this determination was known, it was opposed by members of the Old South church, on the ground that it would injure their church. As opposition increased, so, also, friends and helpers were raised up; and after importunate prayer continued for five years more, in February, 1809, the meeting was held, which resolved immediately to carry the plan into effect. Measures were taken to build a house for public worship in Park-street; and to organize a church which should guarantee the faithful dispensation of divine truth. So low was the state of religious feeling,

that even the Old South church refused to assist in the organization of the new church; but they "went on building," and the Lord prospered them. Park-street meeting-house was dedicated in January, 1810; and though heresy came in like a flood, the Lord enabled the little church, of but twenty-six members, to maintain the standard of truth which they had erected. The "Society for Religious Improvement" discontinued their meetings when Park-street Church was formed.

After a contest of nine years more, against error and misrepresentation, it was found that another house for the pure worship of God, was necessary; and the Lord inclined a pious man, now almost ripe for heaven [since dead], to erect a meeting-house in Essex-street. In the mean time, the Old South church was favoured with the faithful labours of Mr. Huntington, first as colleague, afterwards as successor to Dr. Eckley. That church was increased in numbers, and in its attachment to the true Gospel; and in the year 1822, a delegation of ten brethren was sent by Old South and Park-street churches, to strengthen the feeble church in Essex-street, now called Union church.

This first attempt at the system of colonizing churches was approved and blessed by their gracious Lord. In 1823 and 1824, the Lord poured out his Spirit on the three churches, and a powerful revival of religion was the means of adding to Park-street church, one hundred and twenty members; to the Old South, one hundred and one; and to Essex-street, sixty-two: total in Boston, two hundred and eighty-three. The work also extended to Mr Fay's church in Charlestown, to which sixty-five were added.

In 1825, a new meeting-house became necessary, to accommodate the friends of truth in South Boston, and was accordingly erected, with the aid of the brethren in the above-named churches; and another church was organized there, which maintains the truth as it is in Jesus.

Encouraged by these successful efforts, the friends of Christ resolved to erect a meeting-house in Hanover-street, which was dedicated March 1, 1826, and a church composed of thirty-seven delegates from the other churches, was planted there, and has since increased more than four-fold.

The friends of the Rev. Dr. Jenks, who had been labouring in the city for several years as a missionary, resolved to erect a meeting-house for him in Green-street. This was completed in October, 1826, and a church organized there, which has been greatly increased.

Another revival of religion has since been granted to the churches. It commenced in Essex-street church, in January, 1826; extended within a few months to the other churches, and still continues. In 1826, there were added to Essex-street church, fifty; Hanover-street, forty-five; Park-street, twenty-four; Old South, fourteen. Total in 1826, one hundred and thirty-three. The additions in 1827, were, to Old South, ninety; Park-street, seventy-two; Essex-street, seventy-six; Hanover-street, one hundred and eighty-seven; Green-street, ninety-eight. Total, in 1827, five hundred and twenty-three. The whole number added, during the present revival, is seven hundred and thirty-five. A portion of these were by letter from other churches in the country.

The Lord having succeeded every attempt to enlarge his kingdom, a meeting was held on the 21st of March, 1827, to consider whether it was not expedient to erect another house for God. It being doubted whether it was most needed at the north or south part of the city, it was resolved to erect *two*, one in Pine-street, and the other in Salem-street. These were completed about the 1st of January last, (1828), and churches, principally composed of delegates from most of the other churches, now occupy these temples of the Most High, and maintain public worship.

There are now *nine* commodious houses for public worship, with orthodox churches, embracing 1700 members; and all are favoured with faithful devoted pastors.

During this time, the Lord has not confined his blessings to Boston, but has enabled his people to erect houses of worship, and organize churches, which have held up the light of divine truth amidst surrounding error, in Medford, Waltham, Cohasset, Concord, Walpole, Bridgewater, Cambridgeport, Brighton, and several other places in this part of the commonwealth.

Since 1804, when those *eight* brethren assembled to inquire what the Lord would have them do, and had not strength of faith enough to pray together, *behold, what hath God wrought!* "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto his great name, be all the glory, for ever!"

It should also be mentioned as matter of praise and gratitude to God, that during the period of declension alluded to above, the two Baptist churches in this city, with their venerable pastors, Stillman and Baldwin, held fast the faith once delivered to the saints, and that they have established additional churches in commodious houses of worship in Charles-street, and in Federal-street, and in the adjoining town of Roxbury, and

other places. They have also had considerable additions to their churches during the present revival.

[The observations of Reed on this refreshing document are valuable, and we therefore subjoin them.]

This is evidence sufficient for Boston, and the same evidence might be given at length of churches spread over the state. In many instances, when the minister has avowed himself, and yet resolved to retain the pulpit, a secession has ocurred, and another place been built, so that he has been left without a congregation. In most places there is some mixture of orthodoxy in the audience; and on this account the minister does not mostly insist on his peculiarities; for commonly the retirement of the orthodox is the ruin of the interest.

Every where they are going down. They still retain what endowments they held; and in Boston they have the wealth and fashion of the place about them; and they have the honour of being considered as the friends of the elegancies and literature of more refined life; but as a sect holding certain peculiarities which distinguish them from others, they are impotent indeed. "Rich, but inefficient," as it has been used by one of their zealous champions, to characterize that portion of their body in the father-land, may be employed with equal significance here. Since they have avowed themselves, they have taken the field in their own defence. But, with perhaps a decided superiority in letters and in adroitness, they have been beaten from every post. They first took the ground of biblical criticism, and were driven back to the gound of rational religion. From this again they were forced, and then they ventured to rest the conflict on the tendencies of the systems. Did they not know that Fuller possessed this ground unquestioned? They have now come frankly to the question, Is the Bible an inspired book?

The summary, then, on the subject is, that this defection is of a limited nature, and is now in a state of retrocession. In Massachusetts, to which it is almost entirely confined, its churches, as compared with the orthodox congregations alone, are not more than as one to three. And yet by this test they appear stronger than they are, for most of their churches are poorly attended; and many who do attend are attached to orthodoxy, and would leave if the preacher should venture on a plain announcement of his peculiarities. In Boston, there are, as we have seen, in the Congregational denomination, nine churches against thirteen; and the communicants of the

fewer churches greatly exceed those of the major number. Besides there are to be reckoned the orthodox of the other persuasions; so that, even here, on any question of interest, which would unite the orthodox bodies against the heterodox, they have a decided majority. Boston only wants one man to arise, of philosophical mind, fine taste, and eloquent parts, who shall have been redeemed from these errors, and who shall present the truth with pious earnestness to the understanding, by the aid of the imagination and affections, to expel this sophistical spirit from its last hold among the literary and the polite of society.

CHURCH OF POOR AFRICANS AT LEXINGTON.

By the law of the State (of Kentucky), no coloured persons are permitted to assemble for worship, unless a white person be present and preside. On this account, the elders of Mr. Douglas's church attend in turn, that the poor people may not lose the privileges they prize. At this time, two whites and two blacks were in the pulpit. One of the blacks addressing me as their "strange Master," begged that I would take charge of the service. I declined doing so. He gave out Dr. Watts' beautiful Psalm, "Show pity, Lord; O Lord forgive," &c.: they all rose immediately. They had no books, for they could not read; but it was printed on their memory, and they sang it off with freedom and feeling. There is much melody in their voice; and when they enjoy a hymn, there is a raised expression of the face, and an undulating motion of the body, keeping time with the music, which is very touching.

One of the elders then prayed; and the other followed him, by reading and exposition of Scripture. The passage was on relative and social duties; and I could not avoid observing how it reflected on the conduct of the white, and pleaded for the poor slave. They sang again, "Come, we that love the Lord," and with equal freedom and pleasure. The senior black, who was a preacher amongst them, then offered prayer and preached. His prayer was humble and devotional. In one portion of it, he made an affecting allusion to their wrongs. "Thou knowest," said the good man, with a broken voice, "our state —that it is the meanest—that we are as mean and low as we can be. But we have sinned—we have forfeited all our rights

to *Thee*, and we would submit before *Thee* to these marks of thy displeasure."

He took for the text of his sermon those words, "The Spirit saith, come," &c. He spoke with connexion of our original distance; of the means provided for our approach and redemption; of the invitation as founded on these; and closed by an earnest and well-sustained appeal to them to act on the gracious invitation. "Ah, sirs," he exclaimed, "do you ask what it is to come? Oh! it is to know your own weakness; it is to know your own unworthiness; it is to know that you are sinners, and ready to fall into hell for your sins; it is to fly to Jesus Christ as your help and your Saviour; and to cry, 'Lord, save or I perish.' To come! O, it is to fall down at his feet—to receive him as your new Master—to become new creatures—and to live a new life of faith and obedience." "O, sirs," he continued, "that you would come! How can I persuade you to come! I have seen the good and the evil—I have seen the Christian dying, and I have seen the sinner dying." He spoke of both; and then referred to his own experience—the change religion had made in him—the happiness he had since he knew it—the desire he had they should be happy likewise. It was indeed a very earnest and efficient appeal.

Much has been said, and is still said, about the essential inequality of the races. That is a question which must be settled by experiment. Here the experiment was undoubtedly in favour of the blacks. In sense and in feeling, both in prayer and address, they were equal to the whites; and in free and pointed expression much superior. Indeed, I know not that while I was in America, I listened to a peroration of an address that was superior to the one I have briefly noted to you.—*Reed and Matheson.*

WHAT DID JEPHTHA DO WITH HIS DAUGHTER?

In order to arrive at a correct and satisfactory judgment on this question, let us place the sacred narrative before us, and abide strictly by its details. The great vice of the generality of commentators on this as well as other subjects is, that instead of referring in an independent manner to the original,

they slavishly copy from each other, and they, together with the herd of their readers, are content to retail at second hand the arguments usually put forward on the side they have espoused. Read the whole passage, Judges xi. 29—40.

What did Jephtha do with his daughter? One thing is certain, whatever he did with her he did with her according to his vow. This the sacred narrative distinctly affirms. "He did with her according to his vow, which he vowed." What was this vow?

Jephtha's vow, according to the common translation, is in these words—"If thou shalt without fail deliver the children of Ammon into mine hands, then it shall be that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." This translation unquestionably represents Jephtha to have offered his daughter in sacrifice.

A second translation is almost universally adopted by those who believe that Jephtha did not sacrifice his daughter. This translation consists in rendering the Hebrew conjunction *vau*, in the above passage, *or* instead of *and*. There are many instances in our translation where it is so rendered, and it is to be carefully noted, that our translators so render the word in this very place in the margin. According to this translation, the vow of Jephtha was very different from an intention to sacrifice a human victim, much less his own only child. His language, according to this version, was this—"Whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me—shall be the Lord's, OR I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." That is to say, If it be a person that comes forth of the doors of my house to meet me, that person shall be dedicated to God; but if it be a beast, I will offer that beast for a burnt-offering.

Now what are we to think of this version of Jephtha's vow? How does it bear examination? Does it harmonize with the various circumstances of the transaction, and with what were likely the feelings of Jephtha's mind in the solemn crisis of his addressing himself to the God of Israel, in going forth to do battle in his name against Israel's enemies? To me, I confess, this version appears altogether unsatisfactory. It is not at all likely that Jephtha could suppose that any beast should come forth out of his *house* to *meet* him, which could be offered in sacrifice according to the religion which Jephtha professed. The ox or the sheep would not from their known

dispositions come forth to *meet* him, nor would they be in his *house* to come. The dog would have the affection and sagacity to do so; but the dog was an unclean animal, and was therefore forbidden to be offered. Besides, when I figure to myself what likely were the feelings of Jephtha on that great occasion, I conceive that he would be too much in earnest, too honest and warm-hearted, in making his vow, to make it in the equivocating style of this translation—"Shall surely be the Lord's, OR I will offer it up for a burnt-offering." This mode of expression, I think, savours too much of refinement—too much of subtlety—too much of mental reservation, for such a man, in such circumstances, and in such a presence! I am inclined therefore to dismiss this translation as unsatisfactory. What! my reader exclaims, are you too of the opinion that Jephtha sacrificed his daughter? Be not so fast, good reader; we are not reduced to this alternative.

There is a third way of rendering the language of Jephtha's vow. It appears to have been unknown to our translators; but it has the sanction of some of the best modern Hebrew critics, and it presents the language of Jephtha's vow before us in a light so clear, consistent, and satisfactory, that it commends itself at once to our feelings and our understanding. It is as yet generally unknown to common readers, and therefore it is the more important to give it all publicity.

Let us see this third version of Jephtha's vow. It consists of two parts, and reads thus:—"Then it shall be, that *whosoever* cometh forth out of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's, and I will offer *him* a burnt-offering." The word which we translate *it*, may as well be translated *him*; it refers not to what should come to meet him, but to the *Lord;* "and I will offer *him (the Lord)* a burnt-offering." Jephtha's meaning, therefore, was, that he would dedicate the *person* who came to meet him to the service of the Lord for life, and that he would offer the *Lord* a burnt-offering.

Whom would Jephtha naturally anticipate to *come forth* to meet him, and not only come forth to meet him, but come forth out of the *doors of his house?* As he desired of the Lord that he should grant him to return in peace to his house, victorious over Ammon, whom would his heart naturally anticipate to meet him, welcoming his return and rejoicing in his victory? No beast surely; not a stranger; not an indifferent person; but one of his own family—one who felt the deepest interest in him, and to whom he was most dear.

His daughter was his only child; beside her, he had neither son nor daughter, and whom would it be so natural for him to expect to come forth to meet him, with extended arms and with the symbols of congratulation and victory, as his dear and only child? Let us realize the feelings of the father, with such anticipations in his mind; let us place ourselves in his situation; and can we suppose that it was reasonable—that it was natural—that it was at all consistent with the ordinary feelings of the heart, that in framing his vow, and in uttering it before God, he should meditate such a deed as the sacrifice of his only daughter? An appeal to the heart refutes such an idea. We are not to suppose Jephtha was a monster, and not a man.

Not only was Jephtha a man, but he was a pious and good man. Paul enrolls him in his list of Old Testament worthies. That he feared God, is evident from the very circumstance of his vow, seeking safety and victory at the hand of God, on the eve of battle. Fearing God, we conclude, that he would make him no vow, that would imply the possibility of offering a human sacrifice, much less that of his dear and only daughter. Such a vow could form no part of the character of a hero or of a saint; and Jephtha was both.

Jephtha, too, was an Israelite. Not only was he a religious man, but he was religious according to the ordinances of the Mosaic dispensation. Was it any part of the Mosaic law to offer human sacrifice, much less the fruit of the body for the sin of the soul? By no means. Human sacrifices were the abhorrence of the Lord. To sacrifice the fruit of the body was the very worst abomination of pagan idolatry. Jephtha, moreover, was no priest. According to the law of Moses, no one was allowed to perform the rite of sacrifice but the regular priest. Suppose Jephtha to have been so unnatural and brutishly ignorant, as the notion of his sacrificing his daughter makes it necessary to suppose him, are we to believe also that he could find one among the Lord's priests in Israel, as unnatural and brutishly ignorant as himself, to perform the horrid rite? The thing is incredible.

Jephtha's vow, moreover, was accepted. By answering his solemn appeal, and crowning his expedition against the invading Ammonites with success, the Lord testified his approval of Jephtha. He gained the object of his vow; he was victorious; the "Lord delivered the children of Ammon into his hands;" "he returned in peace from the children of Ammon." His vow would not have been accepted had it been a human sacrifice

which he did offer, or intended to offer. It was against the law; and even had the sacrifice not been forbidden, or wrong in itself, but merely not appointed, it would not have obtained acceptance with the Lord on the ground of its being will-worship. Without faith it is impossible to please God. Now faith has respect to some command or promise of God. An unappointed sacrifice, particularly a forbidden one, was no work of faith. But Paul classes Jephtha among the believers. We therefore conclude, that he neither sacrificed his daughter nor any human victim, nor even meditated such a deed.

Jephtha's daughter acquiesced in her father's disposing of her according to his vow. The struggle was painful, but still she acquiesced. Did this imply that she consented to be killed—that she acquiesced in her own murder? All right comes from God. Had the father any right, any warrant from God, to kill his daughter—to kill her even for the religious object of sacrifice? We have seen that such a thing would have been an abomination to the Lord. Even had Jephtha proposed such a thing, would his daughter have had any right or warrant from God to consent to her own murder? The moral law is above every law. We have no right to kill others or consent that others should kill us. Our lives are God's property. Consenting to the unjust taking away of our life, we should be accessary to our own murder. To represent Jephtha's daughter to have been sacrificed, is, therefore, to calumniate the memory of the daughter as well as of the father.

What, then, did Jephtha do with his daughter? According to the terms of his vow, he dedicated her "to the Lord, *and* he offered *him*, that is to say, the Lord, a burnt-offering." Jephtha's daughter was dedicated to the service of God for life, in a state of perpetual virginity. This is evident from the narrative. "He did with her," it is stated, "according to his vow; *and she knew no man. She knew no man:* had she been sacrificed, there would have been no such intimation; but, remaining for life a virgin in the service of God, according to her father's vow, accounts for the mention of that particular in the narrative.

I know that it may be said, in reply, that the law of Moses required that those who were devoted of men should not be redeemed, but "should *surely be put to death.*" This would have great weight, did we attend only to the *sound*, and not the *sense* of Scripture. The devoting here, means, as we shall see by referring to the original, not the devoting in a way of dedication to the Lord, but the devoting of a thing accursed

in order to *destruction*. Such was the case with the Canaanites and the Amalekites. This law had nothing to do with *sacrificing* to the Lord. It has no bearing, whatever, upon the case of Jephtha's daughter.

I may be asked, what, on the principle of Jephtha's daughter not being sacrificed, but only devoted for life to the Lord in a state of virginity, am I to make of that part of the narrative, when it is said, "It was a custom in Israel, that the daughters of Israel went yearly to *lament* the daughter of Jephtha, four days in a year." I reply, that the difficulty here rises from an incorrect translation of the word rendered lament. It properly signifies to discourse with. Our translators, themselves, were sensible of this, and accordingly they insert that rendering in the margin; we there find it translated "*talk with*." How could they "talk with" her, unless she were *living*. It was the custom for the daughters of Israel to set apart four days annually, to visit and converse with the daughter of Jephtha, in honour of her father, as a hero and a deliverer of Israel, and in honour of the filial piety, the self-devotedness, and the heroism of the dutiful and devoted daughter of Jephtha.

It may also be asked, how, on the principle of her not being slain, are we to account for the distress displayed, both by father and daughter, when it was found that it was with *her*, that he must do according to his vow? The distress of both was, indeed, great. Jephtha returns victorious to his house. Who comes forth to meet him? His daughter, his dear and only child. She comes forth with all the proper feelings of an affectionate child, to welcome her beloved father, hail him as a conqueror, and celebrate him as great in Israel: she comes "to meet him with timbrels and with dances." What were the feelings of the father? His vow rushes upon his mind. His daughter is the subject of it, and he is overwhelmed with grief and distress. He rends his clothes and exclaims, "Alas! my daughter." But shall he not violate his vow, rather than fulfil it? No; he fears God, and must not mock—and, therefore, must perform his vow. "I have opened my *mouth unto the Lord*," said he, "and I cannot go back." Had not the vow been a proper one, one in perfect accordance with the moral and ceremonial law, God would not have required its fulfilment: the duty, in that case, would have been not to fulfil it. This shows that it was not sacrifice, but dedication, which was intended by the vow. Why then Jephtha's distress? Why did his daughter ask for two months time, to go to the mountains with her companions, to bewail her virginity? The answer is

easy and satisfactory. The Israelites had a strong desire for offspring. It was a feature in their national character. In this there was something natural, as the desire belongs to human nature; something national, as they wished to perpetuate the race of Abraham, to whom "pertained the covenant, and the giving of the law, and the promises;" and something religious, as Israel was the peculiar people of God, and from that people was to come the Messiah, the hope of Israel, in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed. Jephtha and his daughter entertained these feelings, as well as other Israelites. But there was something more. Jephtha's daughter was his only child. By devoting her to a state of virginity, both he and she saw the extinction of their family. Hence their grief. They had human feelings, and therefore felt; but they had piety and public spirit, and their piety and public spirit gained the victory over their private feelings. Jephtha executed his vow, and his daughter dutifully and nobly acquiesced. He said, "I have opened my mouth unto the Lord, and I cannot go back." She said, "My father, if thou hast opened thy mouth unto the Lord, do to me according to that which hath proceeded out of thy mouth; forasmuch as the Lord hath taken vengeance of thine enemies, even of the children of Ammon."

LUTHER.

IGNORANCE AND SIN TWIN SISTERS.

"WE are informed, by the most unquestionable authority, that 'of making many books there is no end;' and yet we learn, from the pen of the same inspired author, that 'where there is no vision the people perish.' In the present day, however, we observe the press teeming with publications of all sizes; publications of every sort, and on every subject; so that our difficulty does not consist in the scarcity of books, but in a prudent selection. There was a time in the history of our country, when there was no danger to be apprehended to the morals of the people from an abundance of books, whatever there might be from the spirit of their authors, or the principles which they maintained. There was a time, no later than in the year 1299, when a Bishop of Winchester could not obtain the loan of a Bible with marginal annotations, even from his own cathedral convent of St. Swithin, without giving a bond, drawn up with great solemnity, to secure its due return. There was

a time when any person who gave a book to a religious house, believed he merited eternal life by so valuable a donation; and, accordingly, it was offered upon the altar with great ceremony. There was a time when the most tremendous anathemas were peremptorily denounced against those who should dare to alienate a book presented to the library of a religious house; a time when the prior and the convent of Rochester declared most expressly, they would every year pronounce the irrevocable sentence of damnation on that man who should dare to purloin or conceal a Latin translation of Aristotle's Physics, or even to obliterate the title. In the year 1422, the gift of a book to Lincoln cathedral, by Bishop Repyndon, is thus carefully worded, in the memorial written by the prelate himself on that occasion: 'I, Philip Repyndon, late Bishop of Lincoln, give this book, called Peter de Aureolis, to the new library to be built within the church of Lincoln; reserving the use and possession of it to Richard Trysely, clerk, canon, and prebendary of Miltoun, in fee, and to the term of his life; and afterwards to be given up and restored to the said library, or the keepers of the same for the time being, faithfully and without delay. Written with my own hand, A.D. 1422.' When a book was purchased, the transaction was considered of so much importance, that it was customary to assemble persons of distinction and character, and to make a formal record of their presence to witness the deed. Among the royal manuscripts, in the book of the sentences of Peter Lombard, an Archdeacon of Lincoln, is left the following entry: 'This book of the sentences belongs to Master Robert, Archdeacon of Lincoln, which he bought of Geoffrey, the chaplain, brother of Henry, vicar of Northelkington, in the presence of Master Robert de Lee, Master John of Lirling, Richard of Luda, clerk, Richard the almoner, the said Henry the vicar, and his clerk, and others; and the said Archdeacon gave the said book to God, and St. Oswald, and to Peter, Abbot of Barton, and the convent of Barden.' About the year 1225, Roger de Insula, Dean of York, gave several Latin Bibles to the University of Oxford, with a condition, that the students who perused them should deposit a cautionary pledge. Before the year 1300, the library of that University consisted of a few tracts only, which were chained, or kept in chests, in the choir of St. Mary's Church. In the year 1446, there was this injunction upon the young gentlemen of that college: 'Let no scholar occupy a book in the library above one hour, or two hours at most, so that others be hindered from the use of the same. Now, under these cir-

cumstances, it cannot be supposed for a moment that 'much learning made the people mad.' What then was the moral and intellectual state of the country? It was ignorant, superstitious, and most awfully degraded. Will-worship, penances, pilgrimages, and crusades to rescue Palestine from the possession of infidels, supplanted every feeling of humanity, every principle of pure devotion, and every proper sentiment respecting God and his Son Jesus Christ. The crucifix was substituted for the cross; the priesthood for the law; the form of religion for its power.

BISHOP M'ILVAINE IN ENGLAND.

Wednesday, Jan. 7th, 1835.—This was the day for the holding of the annual clerical meeting begun by Daniel Wilson (now Bishop of Calcutta) when Vicar of Islington, and continued by his son and successor. Having received a kind and urgent invitation to attend, I could not but avail myself of so excellent an opportunity of meeting many of the best and most useful clergy of the Church—of learning what such men thought of the times, and of receiving that spiritual benefit, which the communion of such brethren might well be expected to afford. The object was strictly devotional, as will appear from the order of the exercises.

The subject that had been given out previously for consideration was: *The present condition and prospect of the Church of Christ, and the duties resulting therefrom.* The following order of exercises, as laid before each person, will give you an idea of the devotional and well regulated character of the meeting: "The Rev. J. W. Cunningham, President, will open the meeting with prayer, and briefly state the subject. The Rev. A. Brandram will then address the brethren. Hon. and Rev. B. W. Noel, will then pray for the world at large. Rev. W. Jowett will then speak. Rev. E. Bickersteth will then pray for the church of Christ. A hymn will then be sung, selected by E. Bickersteth. Adjournment for half an hour at one o'clock. Professor Scholefield (Professor of Greek, Cambridge,) will then speak. Rev. J. Cunningham will then pray for ourselves. Rev. S. Wilks will speak. Rev. H. Fell will offer a concluding prayer of thanksgiving. General conversation will follow for about an hour, from half past three to half past four, and the meeting close with a hymn of praise.

Rev. E. Bickersteth will preach in the evening for the Church Missionary Society.

Professor Scholefield being absent, his place was allotted to me. At about a quarter before eleven, Mr. Cunningham took the chair, and opened the meeting on the brighter aspect of the times, in regard to the Church of England, than when they were together a year before.

After a very devotional and earnest prayer by the President; Mr Brandram, Secretary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, a clergyman of a sound practical mind, and of an humble, affectionate spirit, with a great deal of self-evident honesty and candour, began his remarks by laying down a preliminary as to what was to be regarded as the *Church*, and who were to be considered as its members. He supposed that all present were agreed that the members of the Church were not restricted to the circle of such as had been baptized by a ministry episcopally ordained. This he thought of importance to be premised, because on his view it was becoming more common than formerly to take more exclusive ground on this head. He then took occasion to speak in the kindest and most affectionate spirit of the piety which he knew to exist among the Dissenters—of their zeal to spread the Gospel, and the Divine blessing on their labours, while at the same time he condemned the very great measure of political partizanship, and hostility to the Church of England, that has recently, more than formerly, appeared among them. His next head was the *prospects of the Church*. Of these he took a cheerful, encouraging view; and as regards particularly the prospects of the Church of England, his anticipations were much less gloomy than some of his brethren would have expressed. In going over the state of the ancient churches of the East, he saw promises of their being soon revived to a state of more primitive purity. Touching upon the churches of Europe, he mentioned a decided improvement in Hanover, as to the shining of the true light—that though the state of things in that region was still dark, it had recently become very different from what it had been. The same might be said of Berlin, and other places in that part of Europe. France also presented many comforting appearances. Portugal was now opened to the free circulation of the Scriptures—all religions were tolerated by law. The British chaplain of Oporto had just applied to the Bible Society for a grant of copies of the Scriptures to be sent him as a beginning of the work in Portugal. The Bishop of Astorgas had recently published an edition of 6,000 Bibles, and hopes were entertained

by the Bible Society of being able to send considerable supplies into Spain. Cheering accounts from the East Indies continually increased—nothing but means and men seemed wanting there. Accounts from the Bishop of Barbadoes, as to the hopes of effective labour among the slaves of the West Indies; and from the confines of China, as to the spread of the truth, in the three principal languages of that immense empire, were also very animating. He acknowledged that Popery was making considerable advances in England, not only by emigration from Ireland, but by proselytes among the English; among people whose ignorance or destitution of good Protestant ministrations particularly exposed them to the delusions of Popery. He concluded his remarks upon the prospects of the Church, by saying, that notwithstanding the troublous times in the political atmosphere of England, the funds of the Bible Society were in a most healthy state, and that he thought from the whole view now of the Church, that God was distinctly bidding us be of good cheer. Under the head of discouragements, he spoke of the iniquity that abounds in England, but called to remembrance what was the state of religion some forty years since, especially as exhibited in the Memoirs of Mrs. Hannah More, and contrasted its condition now, particularly among the higher classes. He thought there was evidence that during the last twenty years, a great work of God had been going on in this kingdom, of which the large increase of faithful clergy was a prominent part. On the subject of the divisions in England, while he lamented many evils arising from them, yet when he looked at the state of religion in the established churches of those Protestant countries of the Continent where dissent has scarcely existed, and saw how much of the good at present apparent in the Church of England may be ascribed under God to the re-action of dissent, there was an important sense in which he would *thank God for dissent.*

In answer to common objections, that so much money is laid out in benevolent efforts in foreign lands, and that corresponding returns of usefulness were not gained, he said that all such contributions amounted to a mere nothing, in comparison with the good already effected; and that it was capable of proof that in the foreign distribution of the Scriptures, England had received in various blessings of God, especially in the re-action of the foreign effort upon the interests of vital religion at home, at least *cent per cent* upon all expenditures. Mr. B. then enumerated certain evils of great magnitude in the Church of

England, the chief of which was, the great deficiency of *discipline*, and the want of *subjection*. His next ground was the *duties* resulting from the condition and prospects of the church. 1st. A most solemn call for every one to be looking most closely to his own personal religion, founded upon the consideration that it is a day of religious profession—a day of spiritual delusions, and that the times demand the most decided tone of spiritual zeal and of true holiness. 2d. The duty of increased humiliation, on account of our personal short-coming, and of the evils in the church, and in the iniquities abounding in the world. 3d. The duty of rejoicing in God—including that of a cheerful, thankful, happy confidence in his care and blessing, amidst all trials, and in view of all prospects, as the strongest encouragement to zeal, and the surest way to success in every path of duty. Here was read that beautiful passage of Isaiah xliii. 1 and 2—"Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee," &c. 4th. Increase in every good word and work already begun, because God has blessed it. 5th. Abound in true charity towards all that differ from us—overcome evil with good. Here Mr. B. read some most Christian exhortations from a late charge of Archdeacon Hodson, on the subject of charity towards Dissenters, in which the good author enjoined special kindness of spirit and behaviour, now more than ever towards Dissenters, not because of any fear of their efforts in opposition to the church of England, but just because they are now *especially unkind*. The spirit of the exhortation seemed more than usually lovely.

ANECDOTES.

MASILLON, an eminent French preacher, in the first sermon he ever delivered, found the whole audience, upon his getting into the pulpit, in a disposition no way favourable to his attentions; their nods, whispers, or drowsy behaviour, showed him that there was no great profit to be expected from his sowing in a soil so barren; however, he soon changed the disposition of the audience by his manner of beginning. "If," said he, "a cause, the most important that could be conceived, were to be tried at the bar before qualified judges; if this cause interested ourselves in particular; if the eyes of the whole kingdom were fixed upon the event; if the most eminent counsel were

employed on both sides; and if we had heard from our infancy of this undetermined trial; would you not all sit with due attention and warm expectation to the pleadings on both sides? Would not all your hopes and fears be suspended upon the final decision? And yet, let me tell you, you have this moment a cause of much greater importance before you; a cause where not one nation, but all the world are spectators; tried not before a fallible tribunal, but the awful throne of heaven; where not your temporal and transitory interests are the subject of debate, but your eternal happiness or misery; where the cause is still undetermined; but, perhaps, the very moment I am speaking may fix the irrevocable decree that shall last for ever; and yet, notwithstanding all this, you can hardly sit with patience to hear the tidings of salvation. I plead the cause of Heaven, and yet I am scarcely attended to."

M. Bridaine.—Bridaine was one of the most celebrated of the French preachers. Marmontel relates, that in his sermons he sometimes had recourse to the interesting method of parables, with a view the more forcibly to impress important truths on the minds of his hearers. Preaching on the sufferings of Jesus Christ, he expressed himself thus:—"A man, accused of a crime of which he was innocent, was condemned to death by the iniquity of his judges. He was led to punishment, but no gibbet was prepared, nor was there any executioner to perform the sentence. The people, moved with compassion, hoped that this sufferer would escape death. But one man raised his voice, and said, 'I am going to prepare a gibbet, and I will be the executioner.' You groan with indignation! Well, my brethren, in each of you I behold this cruel man. Here are no Jews to-day to crucify Jesus Christ; but you dare to rise up and say, 'I will crucify him.'" Marmontel adds, that he heard these words pronounced by the preacher, though very young, with all the dignity of an apostle, and with the most powerful emotion; and that such was the effect, that nothing was heard but the sobs of the auditory.

"He that watereth shall be watered also himself."

Some years ago, a man of the world stood upon the wharf, and saw a devoted company of foreign missionaries go abroad. "He saw the son, the daughter, the brother and the sister, the relation and the friend, with Christian spirit and self-denial, give the parting hand, and he protested against it." These, said he, are just such spirits and talents as we need at home, and it is not right to send them away from the country, when

we need them so much at home. But the spirit of the Lord was there; and the spirit exhibited by these missionaries was made the means of his conversion, and he has now, with his own money, educated more pious young men for the ministry than sailed in that missionary company.—*N. H. Observer.*

NOTICES OF BOOKS.

The God of Providence the God of the Bible; or, the Truth of the Gospel Proved from the Peculiarities of its Progress. By ALEXANDER CARSON, A.M. 18*mo. pp.* 78. *Price,* 9*d.*

MR. CARSON'S worth is not known. His pen has furnished some of the finest specimens of *critical acumen* well applied, that are to be found in our own or in any other language. His exposure of the absurdities of the Popish doctrine of transubstantiation is a master-piece. All the learning and all the Jesuitism of the Romish Church, could not supply even a plausible answer to its lucid statements, and acute and powerful argumentation. On the subject of Unitarianism, too, none has dared to assail his positions. Dr. Drummond, the *Arian* or *Socinian* minister of Strand-street, Dublin, published, some years since, in a boasting pamphlet, what he considered to be a decent defence of Unitarianism. Mr. Carson demolished this defence, and its *Arian* or *Socinian* author (for there is, we suppose, *honest* doubt respecting the *shade* of his creed) has not since dared to look his conqueror in the face. More recently the discussion between the Rev. Messrs. Bagot and Porter, was ably reviewed by Mr. Carson; the review had an extensive circulation, and none of our Northern Arians have even attempted a reply. They are perhaps wise in not meeting such an antagonist, but an enlightened public must feel that the very prudential measure of silence is calculated to damage their theological and critical reputation. We should rejoice to hear of a Unitarian writer seriously taking up Mr. Carson.

We have said that our author's worth is unknown. We venture, however, to predict that the time is not far distant, when he will be duly and extensively appreciated. Men will discover, that in the subtleties of metaphysics he is an overmatch for the self-elected patrons of modern enlightenment, and that the doctrines of the Reformation—the doctrines of evangelical religion, find in him an able, honest, and successful champion. They will discover that few authors, indeed, are superior to Mr. Carson, in acquaintance with the philosophy of language, and in general and biblical criticism.

We hail the pamphlet before us as a valuable appendix to his tractate on the Book of Esther. The title will give the reader a general notion of the object contemplated by the author in its publication; but it is only a careful perusal of its pages, that can convince him of the variety of important and interesting matter which has been brought within such narrow limits. The work has our cordial and warm recommendation; and we take the liberty of quoting Mr. Carson's concluding remarks:—

"How lately have we heard the groans of the disciples of Jesus in Jamaica! Their houses of worship have been pulled down, their property has been pillaged, and themselves thrown into prison or murdered! Jamaica now lies open to the labours of the missionary, and many brethren have entered the field, which is ripe to harvest. The cruel, the worse than pagan slavery of the West Indies is now abolished, and the Gospel can be preached to the injured children of Ethiopia. It is the providential Lord of Heaven, who sits on the throne of David, that has removed the obstacles, and opened the door.

"The amazing number of institutions for propagating the light of Divine truth within the last half century, compared with all that ever was attempted in any other period of the world, is such as to preclude all possibility of doubt that the God of Providence is putting his engines in motion to give accomplishment to the prediction of Jesus. It was at all times the duty of Christians to make such attempts. Why were they neglected for so many ages? Why are they thought of now? Why are God's people of all denominations stirred up to seek the salvation of man? Why is this age distinguished for unparalleled efforts to rescue from darkness Jews and Papists, Mahomedans and Pagans? Certainly because the Lord's time is come, when his house shall be built of all nations. Towards the close of the captivity of Judah, Daniel was stirred up to fast and to pray for the deliverance of his people. And whenever the servants of God are generally excited to seek the accomplishment of his gracious promises his Providence declares that he is about to gratify their desire;—hence, in rapid succession, missionary societies, bible societies, education societies, in every part of the civilized world. Even in benighted Ireland, some parts of the desert are beginning to blossom as the rose; some spots of the wilderness are becoming fruitful fields. The spreading zeal for extending the blessings of the Reformation is peculiarly providential. Even the most zealous friends of the Gospel formerly neglected the conversion of Roman Catholics as a hopeless task. What has kindled such a flame of apostolic zeal in the present times? Does not Providence declare by this, that the period of the tenure of the man of sin is nearly at its close, and that he must shortly surrender his usurped dominion?

"By these institutions, the gradual extinction of party spirit is most pleasingly exemplified, and gives the most promising pledge of success. Formerly, whatever zeal there might be for the salvation of sinners, zeal for its own peculiarities was the prominent features of every sect; now, zeal for the Gospel is evidently paramount; and without sacrificing or compromising the smallest particle of religious principle, all sects of the friends of Jesus can combine in forwarding the cause of the Bible. Without respect to the interests of particular denominations, Christians unite their efforts for the salvation of sinners.

"Nor ought we, in enumerating providential circumstances, to overlook the critical time of the pacification of Europe. How opportunely did this take place to open the Continent to the operations of the friends of the Bible! How many Bibles have since that been poured over the Continent through the Bible Societies of this country! The Continental Society could not have existed without peace. Already it has achieved much good, and promises still more. If Providence gave peace to the Roman empire to make way for the apostles, so has he given peace to Europe to enable England to spread the Gospel over the Continent.

"I cannot close this tract without just noticing that Dr. Doyle says that we do not owe to the Bible, without note or commentary, the modern system of metaphysics. No observation could be more unfortunate. Many of the subtleties of Popery had their origin in the Aristotelian philosophy, and are swept away by true science. To the Providence of the God of the Bible, for the support of the truths of the Bible against the absurd figments of Popery, I do believe we owe the soundest system of metaphysics ever submitted to the world. To the illustrious Dr. Reid of Glasgow College, in the last century, we owe the overturning of that philosophical theory which took away the evidence of the testimony of our senses. Before his time the senses were looked upon by philosophers, as well as by priests, as arrant knaves, not to be credited without a voucher. Dr. Reid ascertained their laws, examined their nature, observed their operations, and estimated their evidence, better than any philosopher that ever existed. He has established it as a first principle, that the testimony of the senses, in a sound and natural state, is the voice of Heaven; and has triumphantly answered all the objections that have been made to them, as fallacious. In doing this, he has laid a foundation for overturning transubstantiation, that disgrace of human understanding, that most absurd of all the absurdities of Popery.

"No lunatics have ever been so frantic as metaphysicians. They go like a pendulum, from side to side, to the utmost bounds of extravagance. When their folly ceases to amaze by its extravagance on the one side, they endeavour to effect their purpose by hastening to the opposite. This has brought the science into discredit. But as the faculties of man are the gift of God, whatever is known as self-evident truth, is to be considered as a divine revelation, and ought, without scruple, to be employed against superstition and error, as far as its influence can extend. The speculations of many, under the name of metaphysics, are mere philosophical romances, that either take as self-evident truth that which is false, or deny first principles that are self-evident. Sober science may, without difficulty, discover the cheat on both sides, by appealing to the light that God has lodged in human understanding. All reasoning must rest on first principles that need no foreign proof.

"I have now traced a chain of providential circumstances throughout a period of eighteen hundred years, all the links of which combine in the accomplishment of the prediction, Matt. xxiv. 14.; and I hope my Christian readers are all prepared to join with me in the conclusion, THAT THE GOD OF PROVIDENCE IS THE GOD OF THE BIBLE!

J. Wilson, Printer, Belfast.